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A Name is a Name

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A NAME IS A NAME

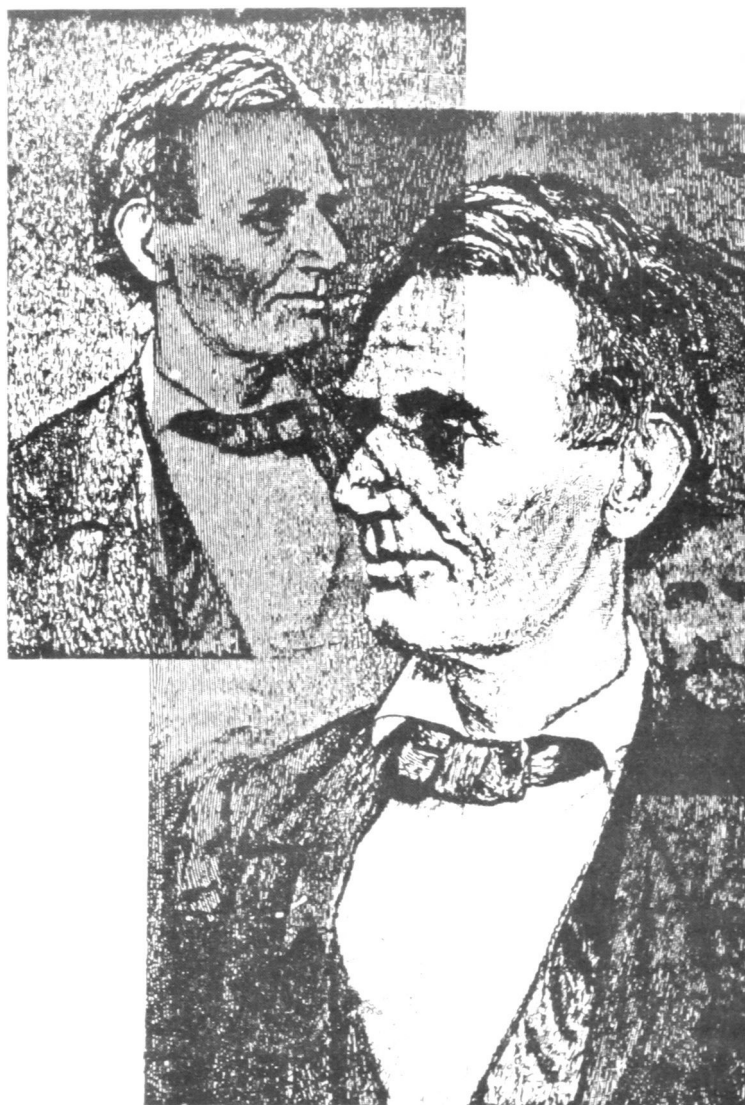
By Aaron A. Baker

In some ways Al Lincoln really looked a little like the "A. Lincoln" of the history books. He was tall, lanky, with an angular face — and wore black, though he didn't have a top hat, and his boots — which I shined at Pop's Barber Shop — were black cowboy with high heels. You see, Al was running for district attorney as "A. Lincoln," though everybody knew he wasn't our sixteenth president who had been dead all these years, but the identification caught on because there was a "Jefferson Davis," another shirt-tail lawyer running for the same office down in Jackson County.

This political race drew some attention before it was over, and even made outside newspapers like CAPPER'S WEEKLY and the DAILY OKLAHOMAN. Old Jeff Davis — as his friends called him — could out-talk Lincoln, my father said, though he didn't have the droll sense of humor. Anyway, Davis beat out Lincoln at the polls because, as my father said again, there were a lot of Texans who settled around Blair and Altus who probably descended from Confederates.

In later years, as everyone knows, other politicians ran for office in Oklahoma with names like U. S. Grant or Jack Dempsey or Will Rogers, but usually didn't last but a term or two — until the novelty wore off or something, which led my father, a school teacher, to remark in Pop's Barber Shop that the practice of running for office under somebody's famous name was not something that should be complacently contemplated, to which Al Lincoln — looking up from my boot-shining — made the comment, "The whole business calls for a continuation with forceful anticipation."

I remember someone laughed, then others joined in, for not wishing to be thought ignorant of big words quoted in such a public place. ■



AARON BAKER, now living at Burns Flat, is a retired teacher and former newspaper editor and columnist. He is a "buff" of local human-interest historical stories and is presently working on a book of poetry titled SOMETHING WILL COME TO YOU, to be published this fall.